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AG 006

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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To: Mr. Newsom

From: Mark L. Schneider

Subject: Argentina

I thought you might be interested in a lunch I attended two days ago with Videla's top civilian aide, Ricardo Yofre who holds the title of Secretary to the Junta. At the invitation of ~~Orfila's~~ ^{Alejandro} people, I was asked to join with Yofre to discuss the current human rights situation in Argentina. I have talked with Orfila about this subject at various times at his request. Orfila, by the way, is ~~back in~~ ^{leaving} returning this week ~~from~~ ^{to} Argentina and you might want to chat briefly with him before you go.

Yofre expressed the view that Videla was in control, desired to put an end to the more egregious violations and would do so after August 1. X August 1 is the date for Videla to assume the "fourth man" position as President (above the other three junta members). Yofre said the determination of chief of the army was important but that even Menendez (the chief rival of Gen. Viola—Videla's choice) and a very hardline general from Cordoba, would be totally loyal to Videla and would support some "political plan" which would have to be designed for the re-design of the political system. Yofre felt that discussions with some sectors of the civilian political

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already had begun, and would continue. The process would be slow, he emphasized.

~~The~~ Slowness also would ~~in~~ characterize the resolution of the political prisoner issue. However, after August 1, he anticipated a greater willingness to let the ~~small~~ uninvolved prisoners under executive control free, to permit others to go into exile under the right of option program and to turn the remainder ~~of~~ over to the courts. He used the number 3800 for prisoners which is about 500 higher than we have been counting. He said he doubted very many more were being kept by security forces; although he acknowledged the possibility of some of the disappeared still being alive. His guess ~~that~~ ^{was} was that most either ~~had~~ had been or killed/ fled the country. ~~ex xxx~~

~~Exx~~ He also raised the underlying fear of the military and security forces of a relaxation and a restoration of civilian rule. They feared, he said, a "Nuremberg trial" climate which would threaten them. In this context, I emphasized our desire was not to punish any individuals ^{place} but to ~~annihilate~~ ~~end~~ to ~~eliminate~~ ~~abuses~~ abuses. He said that any discussion of disappearances tends ~~to~~ to engender this concern. (While he wants this ~~very~~ ugly issue to ^{be} disappear, it remains a fundamental aspect of ~~concern~~ ~~of~~ the international media, public opinion ~~in~~ Argentina and among the ~~activist~~ church and human rights organizations.

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While I would characterize Yofre as extremely
briht and able, he is not held with such high regard by the
right wing of the military. His house was bombed three times
and ~~identification~~ his
a identification with ~~the~~ the return to democracy in concept
a well-known view which has resulted in
some question being raised in Buenos Aires ~~as to his~~ official tenure.
~~as to his~~ official tenure.
~~assumed~~

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